



# FACT SHEET

Connecticut Department of Public Health  
Environmental Health Section  
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Hartford, CT 06134-0308  
Telephone: (860) 509-7740  
<http://www.ct.gov/dph/>

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## What You Need To Know About: **1,1,1-Trichloroethane in Private Well Water**

*Trichloroethane is found in some public and private groundwater drinking water wells in Connecticut. The US Environmental Protection Agency requires regular testing for this chemical in public water systems. Private wells can also have trichloroethane, but testing in these wells must usually be done by the well owner.*

*This fact sheet addresses health concerns and treatment questions about trichloroethane in private well water. For more information, please see the contact information at the end of this document.*

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### **What Is 1,1,1-Trichloroethane?**

1,1,1-Trichloroethane, also known as trichloroethane or TCA, is a chemical that was widely used for metal degreasing and as a solvent for glues and paints. This chemical is used much less now than it used to be because research showed that it might be damaging the Earth's ozone layer. Trichloroethane can get into well water when groundwater comes in contact with a spill or other release to the environment. TCA is one of the more common non-natural chemicals found in Connecticut's groundwater.

### **What Is The Hazard Associated With Trichloroethane In Drinking Water?**

Trichloroethane can cause liver or brain damage in animals exposed to high levels. While there are no studies in people, it is unlikely that exposure to TCA at levels typically found in drinking water could cause significant health effects. Trichloroethane has not been shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals or humans. Animal studies show that it is not likely to cause harm to growth and development or to the reproductive system.

### **How Might I Be Exposed To Trichloroethane From My Well Water?**

Trichloroethane evaporates easily from water, so in addition to taking it into your body through drinking, you may also be exposed to a large amount from breathing the air inside your home. TCA gets into the indoor air from appliances that use water (such as dishwashers and washing machines), and from the shower. Your body may also absorb it through the skin during a bath or shower. A simple way to absorb less is to turn on a bathroom fan while bathing or showering. This can prevent the buildup of TCA in the bathroom air.

## **Is There A Safe Level Of Trichloroethane In Drinking Water?**

The US EPA has set a maximum containment level (MCL) of 200 micrograms per liter (ug/L) for trichloroethane in public drinking water. An MCL is a federal drinking water standard that is set for chemicals in drinking water. When drinking water has levels of a contaminant above the MCL on a regular basis, it means that the water does not meet EPA's health-based standard and something must be done to lower the amount of the chemical or find another water supply. MCLs are set well below the level that causes health effects in people or animals. So if a person has trichloroethane in their well water at levels above the MCL, it is still probably at a level lower than what is harmful to a person's health. However, it is always a good idea to lower the levels in your well water to below the MCL to decrease any chance for harm to your health.

## **How Can I Find Out If There Is a Problem With My Drinking Water?**

The best way is to have your well water tested by a state-certified water testing lab. Instructions on how to find a lab in your area are found at the end of this fact sheet. You can also call CT DEP at (860) 424-3705, or your local health department, and ask if they are aware of a contamination problem in your neighborhood. CT DEP's "List of Contaminated or Potentially Contaminated Sites in Connecticut" can be found on the CT DEP's web site (<http://www.ct.gov/dep>).

## **What Can Be Done If a Private Well Is Contaminated With Trichloroethane?**

If tests show that your well has trichloroethane you should call CT DEP at (860) 424-3705 and the local health department to report the problem. They may investigate to see where the contamination is coming from. If the levels are above the MCL, CT DEP should be able to give you a temporary alternate source of drinking water such as bottled water or they may have a treatment system installed for your well.

## **Whom Can I Contact For More Information?**

For answers to questions about trichloroethane in drinking water, contact the Connecticut Department of Public Health or the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection below:

### **Health Questions:**

CT Dept. of Public Health  
Environmental Health Section  
Environmental & Occupational  
Health Assessment Program  
**860- 509-7740**  
PO Box 340308, MS # 11CHA  
Hartford, CT 06134-0308  
<http://www.ct.gov/dph>

### **Treatment Questions:**

To learn about treatment or  
report a contamination  
problem, call the CT  
Department of Environmental  
Protection (**860-424-3705**).

### **State Certified Laboratories:**

Go to the DPH home page  
(<http://www.ct.gov/dph>) ; click on  
"Environmental Health," click on  
"Environmental Laboratories" and  
then scroll down to "List of  
Laboratories."